

Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States

COMMANDERY OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

In Memoriam

EDWARD JAY ALLEN

Colonel 155th Pennsylvania Infantry

DIED AT PITTSBURGH PA. DECEMBER 26 1915

Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States

HEADQUARTERS COMMANDERY OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Philadelphia, July 5, 1916.

EDWARD JAY ALLEN.

Colonel 155th Pennsylvania Infantry September 5, 1862; honorably discharged July 21, 1863.

Elected February 6, 1884. Class 1. Insignia 3087.

Registrar of the Commandery May 10, 1905-1907.

Born April 27, 1830, at New York City.

Died December 26, 1915, at Pittsburgh, Pa.

Companion Edward Jay Allen was born in New York April 27, 1830, his family moving to Pittsburgh while an infant, and later he attended the Pittsburgh schools for his primary education, finishing with a classical course at Duquesne College, a forerunner of the University of Pittsburgh.

When twenty-two years old he fitted out a "prairie schooner" with ox teams at Council Bluffs, Iowa, and with several companions crossed the plains to Puget Sound, Oregon, the wagon train reaching their destination after some four months of exciting adventures of frontier life, including pursuit by hostile Indians.

On Puget Sound he took up a homestead claim of 160 acres near the site of the present City of Olympia, built a cabin and lived there the requisite period to obtain patent from the Government, and retained the property until recent years.

He was one of the signers of the Monticello Memorial in 1859, a resolution to Congress by the convention favoring the division of Oregon by setting off the Territory of Washington, which subsequently became the State of that name. By appointment of Governor Isaac I. Stevens, he was engaged upon the preliminary survey of the route of the Northern Pacific Railroad, and also constructed the military road through the Nachess Pass, from Fort Steilacoom to Fort Walla Walla, under the direction of Captain George B. McClellan.

He returned to Pittsburgh in 1855, and in 1859 built a section of the aqueduct which supplies the City of Washington, D. C., with water, and the following year entered into a contract for constructing a portion of the Virginia Central Railroad, which work was interrupted by the breaking out of the War of the Rebellion.

Imbued with the desire to reach home, in order to offer his services to the Union, and abandoning all his construction tools and material by sinking them in a deep stream, and started for Pittsburgh, his party was overtaken at Tazewell Court House, Va., by a band of Confederate guerrillas, arrested as prisoners of war, and sent under guard to Richmond. Soon afterward, through an exchange of prisoners, he was transferred in Hampton Roads from a Confederate vessel to a United States gunboat.

Arriving in Washington, he volunteered on the staff of General Fremont, accompanying him on his campaign into Virginia. His previous training qualifying him peculiarly for construction work, he volunteered to command a small detachment and direct the repair of roads and bridges destroyed by the Confederates in the Mountain Department covered by General Fremont's command. Under fire from the rear guard of the enemy, and in advance even of the Union skirmishers, his undertaking was perilous; but the work was well done.

He also served as a volunteer aide in the battle of Lewisburg, Va., May 25, 1862, in which capacity he placed the pontoons for the crossing of the Shenandoah River, which had to be done under fire. He was in the battles of Mount Jackson and Cross Keys, Va., and in all the skirmishes attending the pursuit of Stonewall Jackson, receiving official commendation from his commanding general for courage and gallantry.

In the summer of 1862 he recruited, in Pittsburgh, the 155th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry for three years' service, and was appointed Colonel. At Fredericksburg he was in the center of the battle, in the division under command of General Humphreys, and took part in the famous assault on Mayre's Heights. This was one of the fiercest bayonet charges of the War, and the second deadliest in its toll of human life. Out of the attacking brigade of four thousand soldiers, seventeen hundred and sixty fell in the deadly encounter, baffled by the greatly superior force behind the stone wall which again and again broke up the advance. In this battle he received the praise of General Humphreys, and at the close of the action was in command of the Brigade. Shortly after this, having contracted inflammatory rheumatism from exposure, he was obliged to retire from active service in the field, although he retained his command until after the battle of Gettysburg.

After the close of the war, Colonel Allen was one of the organizers of the Pacific and Atlantic Telegraph Co., occupying the position of secretary until its purchase by the Western Union. During his incumbency, the company forced a radical reduction of the old monopolistic telegraph rates in vogue up to that time, which general reduction remained permanent, working a substantial public economy.

In 1857 he married Miss Elizabeth Wilson Robinson, of Allegheny, and of this union the golden wedding anniversary was celebrated by Colonel and Mrs. Allen, amid the congratulations of their many friends, in 1907. Five children are living, William H. Allen, Mrs. E. A. Rickmers, Miss May L. Allen, Edward H. Allen and Harold Allen.

He was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic and the Society of the Army of the Potomac, as well as of numerous civic and philanthropic organizations.

Colonel Allen was an earnest worker in all that was for good in the community in which he resided, taking an active part in public affairs until within a short time before his death, and a generous contributor to all deserving charities. His death was lamented by not only his army companions, but by a host of friends to whom he had endeared himself during his lifetime.

J. M. SCHOONMAKER,
Col. 14th Penna. Cavalry.
U. B. RIDDLE,
Chaplain 2d New Jersey Infantry.
WM. W. CONWAY,
Lieut. 102d Penna. Infantry.
Committee.

By command of

Paymaster THOMAS SKELTON HARRISON, U. S. N.
Commander

JOHN P. NICHOLSON
Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel U. S. V.
Recorder

Official

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